FREE PULL-OUT: 50 BEAD SHAPES

STEP BY STEP

Wire Jewelry

WINTER 2006 | VOL. 1, NO. 4

11 fabulous projects!

Dale "Cougar" Armstrong's chandelier earrings

twisted colorful beads from telephone wire

make your own ear wires

fun holiday wire designs

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STEP BY STEP Wire Jewelry
WINTER 2006 • volume 1, number 4
www.stepbystepwire.com

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SKILL LEVELS

🌀 **BEGINNER**
Someone just starting out can complete this project and be happy with the results.

🌀🌀 **BEGINNER/INTERMEDIATE**
Someone who has had experience with the material can happily complete this project, but will also learn something new by doing it.

🌀🌀🌀 **INTERMEDIATE**
A comfortable project for someone who has a good working knowledge of the material.

🌀🌀🌀🌀 **INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED**
A project for someone who is ready for a more challenging approach to a material they have worked with repeatedly.

🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀 **ADVANCED**
A good project for someone who is confident with the material and has had a lot of experience with the techniques.

Have a comment?
Whether it's a compliment or complaint, we welcome all reader responses. We can be reached through our Web site: www.stepbystepwire.com, by email at lj.editorial@primedia.com (type "Wire comments" in the subject line), or by snail mail to our new offices at 300 Chesterfield Parkway, Suite 100, Malvern, PA 19355. Please send it Attn: Step by Step Wire Jewelry.

ON THE COVER

Funky Fun Necklace by Stephanie Riger, featured on page 28. Photo: Todd Murray.

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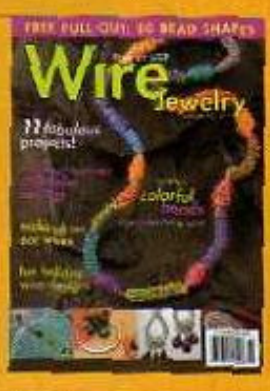
Photo: Todd Murray.

Southwest Boho Earrings by Linda Larsen.
Photo: Todd Murray.

Garnet Coil Earrings by Marie Carter.
Photo: Frank DeSantis.

Chinese Lantern by Joyce Zbarower.
Photo: Todd Murray.



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by Dianne Karg Baron

Freewheeling Pendant
by Linda Smith

OFF THE WIRE

It's always striking to me when I put away my summer clothes and pull out my winter clothes, how all the color goes away. My lovely pink and orange and aqua clothes disappear, and suddenly all I'm wearing is black and brown. Perhaps it's only that way in the parts of the country where we have to bundle up for six months, but it seems it's all they show in clothing catalogs. So I thought I'd buck the trend and put something full of color on the cover of our Winter issue. Stephanie Riger's beautiful necklace is made from brightly colored telephone wire. Imagine, all that pretty wire is usually hiding inside black or gray cable. Here she reveals all those hidden colors in simple coiled beads. Strung together into an endless necklace that needs no clasp, it will bring color and warmth to all your winter outfits.

It can be a challenge bringing color to wire jewelry. That's why adding beads is so appealing. You'll see beads added to every project in this issue; glass beads, sterling beads, pearls, and stones. They can add drama and elegance, or fun and folly. Julie Charles uses brightly colored seed beads as tree ornaments on her Merry Merry earrings. Dale "Cougar" Armstrong adds freshwater pearls to her ornate chandelier earrings. Be sure to visit our Web site, www.stepbystepwire.com for two more complete jewelry projects using beads with wire. On page 34 you'll find our pull-out glossary of some of the most popular shapes of beads. Hang it on your wall for an easy reference guide when buying and designing with beads. Use your imagination and add texture and color to your wire jewelry.

In our next issue, we'll feature some wire jewelry designs that are just as beautiful for their simplicity. No beads, just wire. Chainmaille is made exclusively with jump rings and has fluidity and "hand" that looks and feels wonderful. Look for some chainmaille projects in the spring 2006 issue.

For all of you hooked on working with wire, we are thrilled to announce our first annual Wire Jewelry Fest in July, 2006. Watch our Web site and upcoming issues for all the details. We will be offering a cache of classes with all the best wire jewelry teachers in the country. Plus a hall full of vendors selling everything you need for your passion: gold, silver, copper wire, tools, beads, stones, storage cases and travel bags. Everything under one roof for two whole days of *just* wire jewelry fun! I hope you'll join us!

Denise Peck
Editor-in-Chief

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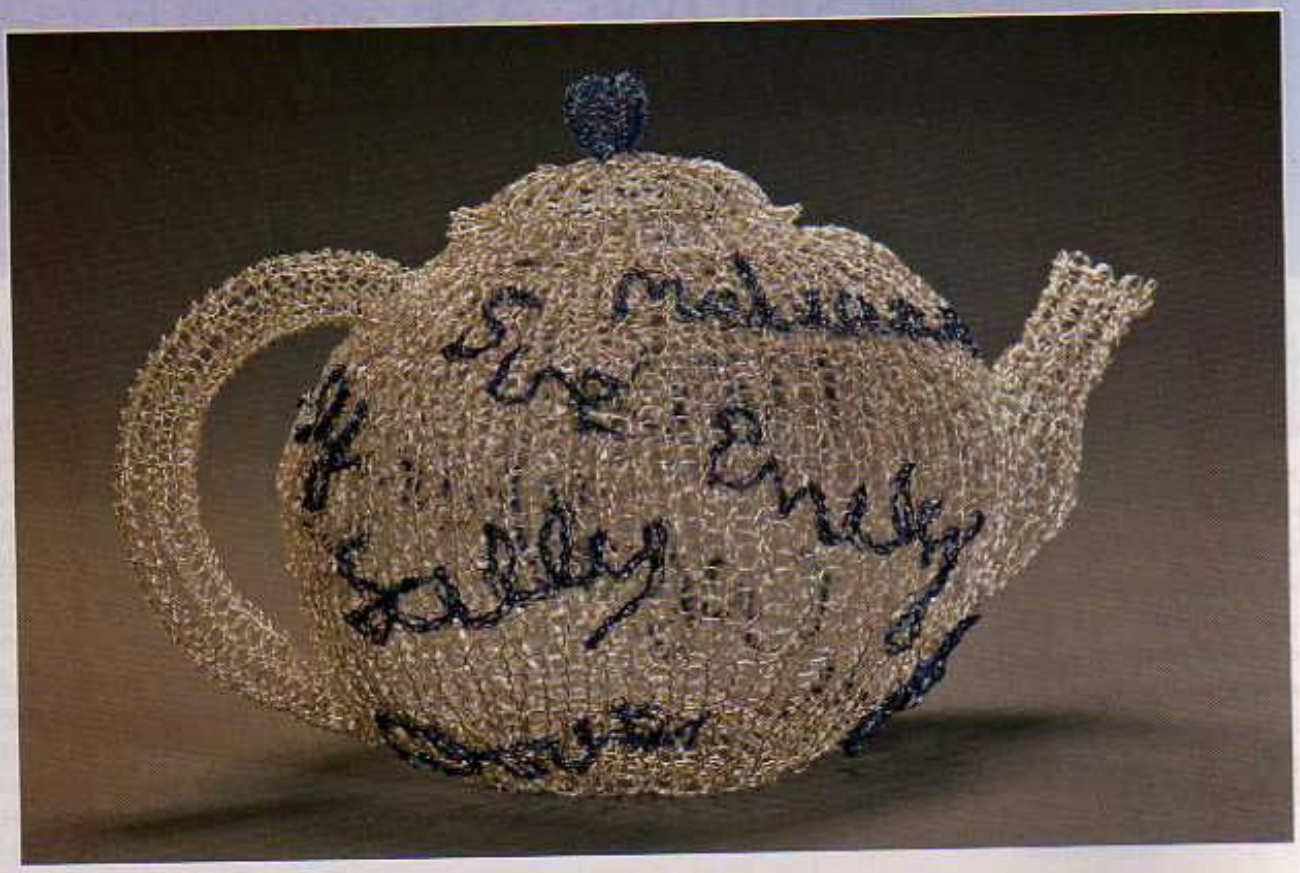

Teapot. Photo by Mark Skalny

Hooked on Crochet

Joan Dulla's wire evolution

Living in Arizona for 22 years made jeweler Joan Dulla yearn for rainbows. Since Arizona rainbows are as rare as flowering cacti, Dulla crocheted her own. The result, the vivacious *Double Rainbow* necklace, dazzled the Manufacturing Jewelers and Suppliers of America (MJSA) judges who awarded it the American Vision Award in 2005. However, Dulla's distinctive work has been catching the eye of judges and collectors since 2001, when she took a hook to gold wire and crocheted a tour de force that was both an homage to pearls and a tribute to the technique that captured them so elegantly. Dulla's pearl and gold necklace was nominated for a *Niche Award* in 2001, and won *Lapidary Journal's* Jewelry Arts Award in 2004. Ask Dulla how long it takes to crochet a winner and she laughingly replies, "Two years of practice and 10,000 beads."

And, by the time she had finished, Dulla had invented a way to speed up the stitch by stitch tedium of crocheting with wire. Using a textile technique that fiber artists call knitting, but she maintains is crocheting, Dulla devised a quicker way to make the wire tube and bead structures that are the foundations of her jewelry. She also applied her technique to the sculptures that emerged after she dipped her brush in her own soul. These life-size wire sculptures resonate with the anguish Dulla overcame by using wire as a therapeutic tool to crochet her way out of two of her life's darker moments.

Dulla's jewelry career began in the early '90s, when she became an impassioned gemstone faceter. However, after 18 months of faceting stones in non-traditional cuts, Dulla was left with a heap of stones no one would set. She enrolled in classes at the Mesa Parks and Recreation Center and learned to set the stones into a new line of jewelry that was an instant success.

Dulla longed to attend jewelry workshops but she was grounded in Arizona, raising two children. When she wasn't making jewelry though, Dulla worked as a grant writer for the Arizona Designer Craftsmen organization, and it was her writing expertise that soon brought the workshops to her.

"We lured fabulous teachers here, and of course they

stayed in my home," she said. "Many wonderful artists went through my house, but Bruce Metcalf and John Cogswell became my guardian angels. And that's how I got my jewelry education."

About the same time, Dulla met and studied with wire dynamo Thelma Cole, who weaved and twined wire into large sculptural torsos. Cole's techniques, along with the serendipitous discovery of Arline Fisch's groundbreaking book that applied textile techniques to wire, gave her the "knock on the head" she needed.

Dulla did not come naturally to crocheting with wire and needed help to learn how to finesse wire around a hook. A friend taught her how to create a wire chain by crocheting around a bamboo skewer. When two hours later, Dulla had produced only 1" of work, she set about finding a faster way, one that didn't produce an unsightly spiral.

"I was so frustrated with crocheting the way my friend taught me. I could see the stitches looked like knitting stitches and thought, let me see if I can make them purl stitches. Or vice versa. That was my "aha" moment. After two years of practice, my work became sculptural and I worked faster because I learned to hold the crochet hook differently from "real" crocheters. And when I teach, I'm really fast, maintaining a rhythm and tension. Instead of a skewer, I crochet eight stitches around a dowel, which produces a sturdy, yet uniform, tube. My students hate me by noon because I make it look so easy. But it isn't.

Double Rainbow. Photo by Mark Skalny.

Emily's Fine. Photo by W. Scott Mitchell.

For the first two years, I hid everything I made because it was disgusting and gross. I even made one ghastly Christmas necklace with green wire and red beads, which, to my embarrassment, sold!"

Dulla's Technique

Dulla uses Boye® and Susan Bates® crochet hooks ranging in sizes from 7 to 9 to crochet 24- to 28-gauge wire around a ½" dowel. She first creates eight foundation stitches, wraps them counterclockwise around a dowel and joins them. Working around the dowel, she passes the crochet hook through the first stitch, grabs the wire, and draws it to the front of the stitch while simultaneously pulling upward on the hook and pushing it toward herself. The rigid, yet lacy, tube this produces becomes the sturdy foundation of many of Dulla's award-winning necklaces.

Dulla's other favorite shape is spherical and many of her necklaces contain crocheted gold and fine silver focal and spacer beads. Beads are created by building onto a base network of eight stitches, then using the thumb and dap to form the bead.

Although Dulla began crocheting with fine silver wire, she was soon enticed by the glow of 14K and 18K gold. This wire, however, was stiffer; forcing her to change crochet hooks every 20 minutes because it heated up the hooks and stripped them of the chrome that acted as a lubricant. Dulla moved on to niobium, the new wire on the block, and by the time she was finished experimenting with it, she had produced another award-winner.

By 2004, Dulla's jewelry had won accolades in the gold, silver, and niobium categories, pushing all three metals in new directions. However, it was experimenting with niobium that gave full expression to Dulla's unabashed passion for vibrant colors. Dulla used anodizing, an underused technique, to permanently alter niobium's grey surface into shimmering rainbow colors. She quickly mastered the technique, and made the rainbow her signature.

Jester necklace in fine silver. Photo by W. Scott Mitchell.

"I don't know why jewelers don't anodize more. Niobium and titanium and new elements on the periodic table in chemistry and were discovered by the space industry," Dulla explained. "Niobium does not conduct heat, so it can't be soldered and must be cold connected. I use an anodizer, with a regulator for voltage, to color it. It really is fun. For a long time, I made *Rainbow* necklaces using only Japanese Toho beads in shimmery purple colors, but once I discovered Swarovski's incredible crystal colors, I could count out the beads and crochet them into the appropriate place before anodizing the necklace.

I put a negative anode in a water bath and a positive anode on the piece. I submerge the entire necklace in the water and turn up the voltage very slowly. It colors instantaneously, beginning with brown, deep purple, and as I turn up the voltage, goes to lighter purple, white blue, yellow, then pink, peach, hot pink, pinky purple and finally, teal. Because I use water as a conductor, it doesn't damage glass or pearls. Metalsmith Wendell Walters taught me this technique at the Mesa school. It really deserves more of a place in fine jewelry making. It's exciting and fun, and looks great. I wear the *Double Rainbow* and single bead niobium necklaces all the time and get comments everywhere I go."

Dulla was unstoppable, continually pushing wire into unusual shapes from beads, pods, and fingers to tubes and flat collars. But one day in 2001, she put her feet up on her desk and crocheted *Recreating Myself* for the Philadelphia Museum of Art Craft Show. In this sculpture, a wire hand holds a crochet hook that has just finished crocheting a hollow wire foot. For some time, wire had become an essential therapeutic tool to Dulla. It had successfully pulled her through two of her life's most agonizing periods: the discovery that she was an incest survivor, and her daughter's fall from a tree.

Conversation. Photo by W. Scott Mitchell.

Two mentors gave Dulla the confidence to continue working on the incest-inspired sculptures. During a Society of North American Goldsmiths (SNAG) conference in 1987, keynote speaker Bruce Metcalf spoke about an artist's unique role. According to Metcalf, it was an artist's job to reflect back to society what it should pay attention to. With Metcalf's support and nurturing, Dulla was able to produce and exhibit the painful sculpture *That's What it Looks Like to a Kid*.

Dulla had met John Cogswell at a workshop at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts. Cogswell too became the "guardian angel" who encouraged her to show slides of *Reliquaries*, more incest-inspired work, for the first time outside her group of friends. *Recreating Myself, Changing My Mind, Healing My Heart*, and *Communion* are sculptural documents of Dulla's courageous and successful emergence from the darkness into the light.

"I left my soul as a child and returned when I started remembering in 1989 when I was 40. This is how I got here. This is who I am. Once I started believing the incest had been real, my creativity blossomed. I believe that all my creativity comes from that hurt little girl. Unless you stand up and do something about it and change your history, there can be no magic in your life and life is only going to get worse. But creating my jewelry is magic to

Recreating Myself. Photo by W. Scott Mitchell.

me. Magic is happening around me all the time, it's so exciting," she said.

Looking around her studio one day, Dulla was amazed to find a basket full of leftover crocheted wire fingers. She arranged the fingers around the rim of the *Finger Bowl* as a symbolic way of washing her hands of this period, closing off this chapter and making peace. She was ready to move on.

Emily's Fine is Dulla's favorite piece. Dulla's daughter Emily was a junior at Boston University, when one June night she fell from a tree she'd been climbing and broke her neck in three places. It took Dulla a year to crochet every minute of anguish, agony, and uncertainty into this delicate 36" silver replica of Emily's spine. Just as Emily has a titanium plate and four screws to support her spine, Dulla made the sculpture's c-5 vertebrae, which she broke in three places, in gold and used niobium to make the plate that holds c-4 and c-6 together.

Gold and Silver Ball Necklace. Photo by W. Scott Mitchell.

Most days, Dulla is up and running by 5:30 a.m. When she isn't teaching metalsmithing, jewelry design, and art appreciation at Central Arizona College, she works on six to eight jewelry and sculptural projects at a time. Dulla also teaches her meditative technique in workshops where her students crochet to background music. When the music ends, Dulla reminds her students to walk around, stretch, and refocus.

When Dulla first began crocheting with wire, she experienced thumb pain from overwork. Searching for a way to make her hook more ergonomic and assure a longer life for her hands, she discovered that covering her hook with plastic tubing relieved the pain. Dulla cuts ¼" plastic tubing, and places it in boiling water. When it softens, she slides it onto the crochet hook, which makes it easier to hold. She shares more helpful tips she's learned from her experience in the book she produced in 2004 that reminds her students of the proper hook, hand, and dowel placement.

Another of Dulla's "aha" moments was crocheting a bracelet using a flat stitch. Interrupted by a telephone call, she returned to the bracelet and crocheted the backside without realizing it. Usually the bracelet arches on one side and collapses when it's turned over. Instead of arching, it produced a straight line at the break, which she later applied to boxes and collars.

Once Dulla perfected the flat stitch, she applied it to the *Pharaoh Necklace*, inspired by Los Angeles's King Tut exhibition. This complex and challenging collar requires additional stitches at the neckline, to make the collar spread out and lie flat, while maintaining the same number of stitches throughout.

"When I crochet wire, I go into a meditative state, which soothes me and feels like heaven. As the wire runs through my hands, I feel the coldness of the metal heat as I stretch and pull it. Its softness hardens and I manipulate it into place. It will do what I want. The air seems to float as I shape the bead, ball, or sculptural form. Noise disappears as I get lost in the process. Five house later I have a necklace or a new sculptural form. The process fills my soul and makes my heart sing.

My work is about the joy and rapture of working with wire. I like challenges and love to push the process a little further. How long does it really take to make the necklace? Fifty-six years. It's a process of growing, changing it, and making it your own that's important. I am trying to do that with my work."

Nina Graci writes about the inspirations and techniques that bring jewelry into the world. She lives in Toronto, Canada, but has been spotted weighing and bartering for silver in remote desert villages.

WIRE-WISE Q & A

with CONNIE FOX

Wire workers are sure lucky critters. We bask in the glow of instant gratification as we make great jewelry in a relatively short period of time. And, we have few safety concerns. Don't pop a flying wire missile into our (and others') eyes as we snip off an end. Don't stand over the liver-of-sulfur solution and do deep breathing exercises. Take frequent breaks to avoid adding those black wrist guards to your arsenal of arm wear. That's about it, without digging up ways to get into trouble. Right?

Well, the answer is an equivocal "maybe," and for this reason: The longer you are a devotee of wire, the more likely you are to develop other jewelry making techniques in order to enhance your wire work. It is tantalizing to walk into the cold connection camp and work with a little sheet metal. And, while you are at it, why not do some fine silver fusing with one of those cute créme bruleé butane torches? Because many of us are not trained metalsmiths, we have not packed adequate safety information for our jewelry making adventures.

A question from contributing editor Nina Graci was the inspiration for this article. She asked me about potential hazards in using the butane torch. And because she is so accustomed to interviewing the experts, she went out and found the answer. I love it. Here is her question along with the response.

Dear Connie:

Many wire jewelers have recently discovered the joys of fusing and joining fine silver wires using a butane torch. I couldn't believe that anything this much fun could be hazard free, so, just to be on the safe side, I asked studio safety guru Charles Lewton-Brain, who is Head of the Jewelry/Metals Program at the Alberta College of Art and Design, if there were any health hazards connected with extended use of butane torching fine silver.

"Any burning fuel creates carbon monoxide, so a closed space would be a problem," he said. "It is possible to get metal fume fever from molten silver, if you breathe lots of it. This is not permanent, but results in flu-like symptoms of nausea, vomiting, difficulty breathing, rashes, etc. I've never seen this from silver, but have from brass and copper.

"Even when using hefty 14-gauge fine silver wire, I suspect metal fume fever is quite unlikely. The problem is not for the average user, but for one who overdoes it in some way; mass, volume, time spent.

"Even at two feet away (but I bet people are closer), staring for long periods of time at metal emitting red light from heat is damaging to the corneas — hence the term 'chain maker's cataract.' Occasional use should pose no problem, but continual use ups the ante. I would recommend didymium glasses for anyone staring too closely at very hot metals for long periods of time. You can use welders' 'Shades' glasses as well to protect the eyes. Sunglasses will not do the trick in the same way. If you're are going to spend more than an hour on it, I would recommend, at the very least, dilution ventilation, that is, working near an open window with air coming in elsewhere in the house as well so it blows past you and the work and out the window."

Another respected expert, Tim McCreight, offers us sound advice in his book *Jewelry Fundamentals of Metalsmithing* to minimize risks in the studio. Here is a summary of some of his recommendations:

- Pay attention to your body. Stop if you are feeling some adverse reaction such as dizziness or congestion. Find out what is happening.
- Avoid problems by wearing protective gear such as goggles, an apron, and gloves when needed.
- Anticipate potential problems and how you would deal with them. For example, what would you do if the drill bit breaks?
- When you need to protect yourself from inhaling specific fumes or particles, use the proper respirator and with the correct cartridge. Replace the cartridges when it is depleted. A respirator is not the same thing as a dust mask.
- Don't eat, drink, or smoke in the studio. Particles and vapors land on your snacks, and your hands will transport dust to your mouth.

A long and happy career or hobby in jewelry making is promoted by minimizing the risks that are part of this work. As you add new skills to your repertoire, take a little time to investigate safety measures. And then link them to the techniques you have learned. Drilling: goggles, butane torch: didymium glasses, patina: apron.

Connie Fox has been making wire jewelry since 1996. She teaches classes in her studio in San Diego and at major jewelry and bead events including Jewelry Arts Expo and Bead Fest. She is also a frequent contributor to *Lapidary Journal* and *Step by Step Beads*. Connie learned jewelry making skills from Lynne Merchant and Deb Jemmot. Over a three-year period, Connie transitioned from being a full-time psychotherapist to working solely as a wire instructor and operating her internet jewelry supplies store, www.conniefox.com.

If you have a question on wirework that is itching to be answered, or a tip you'd like to share with others, please let us know. We can't respond to each question individually but will select a few to answer in this column. Send your questions and tips to: cfox@san.rr.com, Subject: Wire-Wise; or Connie Fox, 2247 San Diego Ave., Suite 237, San Diego, CA 92110. And, please, let us know where you're writing from!

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chinese lantern

Woven wire pendant.

SKILL LEVEL

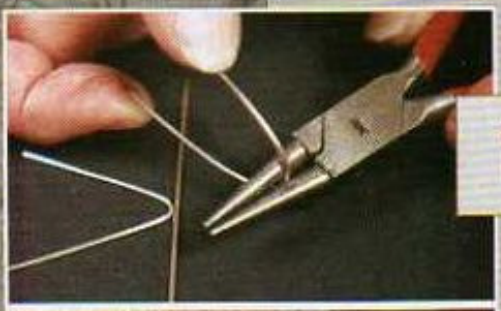
BY JOYCE ZBOROWER

The Chinese Lantern is constructed of two separate but identical halves, held together by compression. The central wire is threaded through small holes drilled into the framework of the wire weave and through two small beads. Extremely simple—but extremely elegant! This project is an adaptation of original work by Steven Brixner.

TOOLS & SUPPLIES

- 14-gauge sterling round wire, 6 pieces at 3" each
- Soldering equipment
- Soft silver solder
- Block of scrap wood
- 1mm drill bit
- Drill
- 2" square bench block
- 8oz. ball peen hammer
- Grinding and polishing bits, flex shaft
- 2 egg-shaped wooden forms, 30mm and 20mm (or smaller), available at craft shops.
- Block of scrap wood with a 1mm hole, or jeweler's vise
- C-clamp
- 30-gauge fine silver round half hard wire, approx. ½–1oz.
- 18-gauge sterling round half hard wire, 8"
- 4mm beads, 2
- Pliers: Round nose, chain nose, flat nose, and locking
- Flush cutters

Photo of finished piece by Todd Murray; all other photos courtesy of Edward Zborower.



1

You will make two separate frames around which you'll weave your fine silver wire. Bend two of the 14-gauge 3" silver wire pieces in the middle, around the fattest portion of your round nose pliers to a 60° angle.

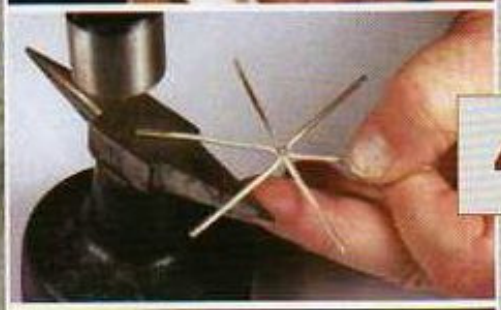
2

Place one of the bent wires on either side of a straight 3" piece of 14-gauge wire and solder them together. Clip the ends so they're all the same length. Make 2 matching frames.

Note: Heat from the soldering equipment and acids used in cleaning the metal can be hazardous. Proper precautions should be taken.

3

Drill a 1mm hole (slightly enlarged) in the very center of the union where you've soldered all the pieces together. This is the center hole where the core wire will hold the pieces together. Nothing but the wire, the two end beads, and the end loops hold the halves together. It will be held together by compression.

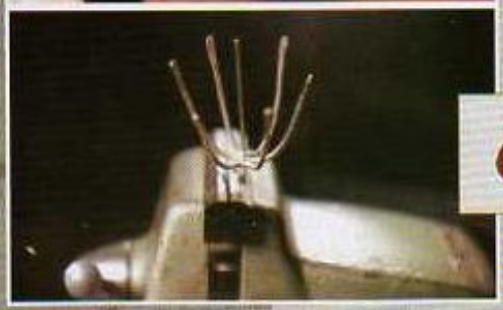


4

Using your bench block and hammer, flatten all six ends of this frame. Flatten them a little bit if you're going to curl them, a lot if you're going to leave them flat. Use the grinding tools to refine the shape, and remove all the sharp edges. Remove the grind marks. Polish.

5

Position the frame over the large wooden egg and bend the frame to fit it. Use the smaller wooden egg to do the same thing.

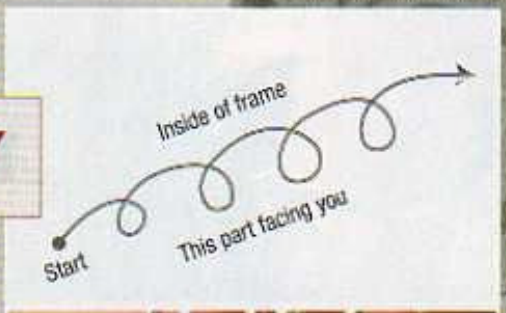


6

Once you've made the two frames to the diameter you want, clamp the jeweler's vise, or the scrap of wood with the hole in it, to the bench. To hold the frame in place, insert a piece of 18-gauge wire upright, and place the first frame open side up over the wire. Your hands are free to do the weaving.

Secure the 30-gauge fine silver wire around one of the upright ribs. Wrap it clockwise several times tightly around this rib near the base of the frame.

7



Begin the weaving with the 30-gauge secured wire by pulling it to the outside of the next rib, wrapping it around completely and taking it to the outside of the next rib.

8

The work will progress counter-clockwise as the frame moves in a clockwise direction. Working in this fashion, the ribs will stand out when your piece is finished.

9

Keep the wraps tight and close. Continue wrapping until you've woven as far as you wish down the spokes. Stop sooner if you are planning to curl the ends. Or, weave until it reaches the base of your flattened ends if you are going to leave them flat. Secure this end of the wire by wrapping it tightly several times around the last rib. Repeat the weaving on the second frame.

10

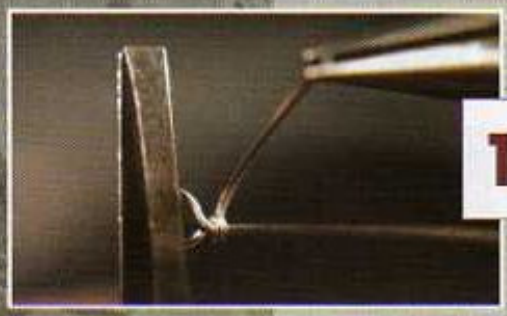
To put two halves together, you'll take 8" of 18-gauge sterling wire, and make a wrapped loop at one end. Hold the wire about 2" from one end in the jaws of your chain nose pliers in your non-dominant hand. With the thumb of your dominant hand, push the wire away from you over the edge of the pliers to a 90° angle.

11

Using the smaller end of your round nose pliers, grab the wire about ½" away from the chain nose pliers and roll it toward you. Stop rolling when the circle is centered over the wire held by the chain nose pliers.

12

13 Continue holding the round nose pliers. Put down the chain nose pliers. Grab the upper end of the wire with your fingers, and continue pulling it around the round nose pliers until it forms a 90° angle with the wire that was held by the chain nose pliers. Remove the circle from the round nose pliers.



14 Hold this wire in your dominant hand, so that you're holding the longer of the two ends. The circle should be free, and the shorter of the two ends should be pointing up. Hold the circle in your flat nose pliers. Grab the shorter wire at its tip with the chain nose pliers, and pull it around the longer wire. Go around it two or three times. Keep your wraps tight and close. Clip the end with your flush cutter. Tweak the end down with your chain nose pliers. Any sharp edges need to be smoothed with a file or grinding tool.

15 Thread the long end of the wire through a 4mm bead, through the hole of one of your wrapped frames, through the hole of your other wrapped frame, and through another 4mm bead.

16 Holding your chain nose pliers against the upper bead, make your second wrapped loop.

Joyce Zborower
is a copywriter by profession, and a crafts artist whenever she can squeeze in some extra time. She currently functions as exhibition chair for the Arizona Designer Craftsmen art group. You can view her work and contact her by visiting http://www.artistsregister.com/artists/AZ758.

southwest boho earrings

Hammered sterling and turquoise dangles.

SKILL LEVEL

BY LINDA LARSEN

This project was inspired by a pair of earrings in a department store for $98. I made these for nothing from scraps leftover from previous projects. I don't think there is more than $5 of materials in them. Who needs to buy jewelry when it's so fun and easy to make?

TOOLS & SUPPLIES

- 6" fine or sterling wire, 14-gauge
- 7-10 stones, beads, or crystals
- About 2" rolo chain or other small link chain
- 24-gauge fine silver wire to make headpins, 2", or very fine purchased headpins
- 6 jump rings
- 2 large headpins for ear wires
- Chain nose pliers
- Double flush cutters
- Round nose pliers
- Chasing hammer and block
- Small torch (optional)
- Liver-of-sulfur (optional)
- Metal file
- Hole punch pliers or flex shaft/dremel

Photo of finished piece by Todd Murray; all other photos courtesy of the author.

southwest boho earrings

1 Cut about 6" of fine or sterling 14-gauge wire with double flush cutters.

2 Wrap the wire on a round object large enough to make two full wraps.

3 Cut cleanly with double flush cutters forming two complete circles.

4 Shape to the drawing (fig. 1) with the ends about ½" apart. As you work on earrings, always make both identical components at the same time so they match.

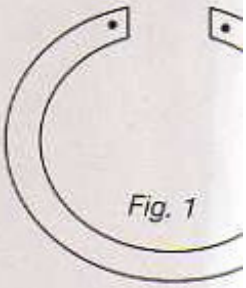


Fig. 1

5 Using a chasing hammer, flare the ends and the middle of the rounded shapes. Then switch to the ball peen end and hammer them to give them texture. When trying to texture both sides on a block, it is best to tap them gently so you don't eliminate the texture on the underside.

6 Drill small holes on the ends of the rounded shape. You can use hole punch pliers, or a flex shaft.

Lightly file the ends of the earrings to remove any rough spots.

Make two ear wires from the two large headpins, using the pattern in fig. 2 for a sample.

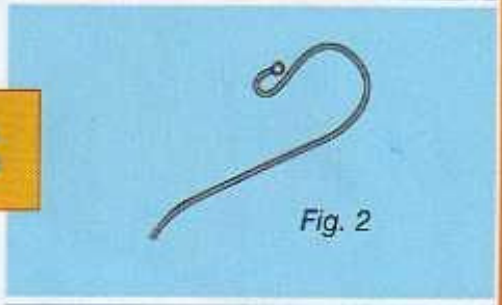


Fig. 2

Cut the end off of the ear wire with the flush edge of the cutters. Don't cut it off too short, because this is a large earring, and it needs the balance. Lightly tap it on your block with your chasing hammer to harden it into shape. File the end so it won't scratch your ear when it's inserted.

Cut 3 joined links off a very small round link chain 4 times, so you have two for each earring.

Attach one of these links to each hole in the hammered component. Always keep your scraps of chain for this type of project. Use a very small jump ring that works with your chain, and make sure to harden it by working it back and forth several times (or "waggle" it) as you close it.

Cut 4 joined links off of the chain two times. Using another jump ring, attach this new piece of chain to the two chains already attached to the earring.

13

Use purchased headpins or make your own with 24-gauge fine silver wire. Thread stones and beads onto the headpins, and using standard wrapped loops, attach them to the links of the chains.

14

Add your ear wires that you made in Step 8 by slipping the jump ring that has three ends of the three chains in it (Step 12) through the ear wire, and slide it down to the loop near the ball end. If you have used light-colored stones, you may want to let the piece oxidize with use. If you want a more dramatic contrast, oxidize and don't clean the wires, only clean the hoop. Have fun wearing them with all your boho chic looks.

Linda Larsen

Fashion has always been a keen interest for Linda, and after making her first piece of jewelry, she was hooked. She is business partners with Susan Lenart Kazmer, and they are working on publishing their first book and starting a wholesale line of jewelry. Linda is most excited about her upcoming trip to the south of France to teach metal arts with Susan. You can reach her at linda@susanlenartkazmer.net.

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two easy ear wires

Make your own findings.

SKILL LEVEL ◎

BY GARY HELWIG

TOOLS & SUPPLIES

- 14" of 20- or 21-gauge wire
- 4 head pins
- 4 beads, 8mm. More beads, or beads in other sizes may be used as desired.
- Jewelry making jig (WigJig Delphi™ or Centaur™ preferred)
- Flush cutter
- Round nose pliers
- Bent chain nose pliers
- Cup burr tool or file
- ½" Super Peg™ for the jewelry making jig
- Nylon jaw pliers (recommended)
- Bench block or anvil (recommended)
- Nylon hammer or chasing hammer (recommended)

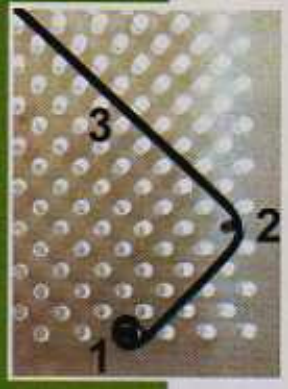
Photo of finished piece by Todd Murray; all other photos courtesy of the author.

I have been asked in the past why anyone would want to make their own ear wires when you can purchase perfectly good ones at a reasonable price. The simple answer is that if you are going to make ear wires that are identical to machine-made ear wires, it is *not* worth your time. But if you could make something unique and not available to purchase, then you'd have a reason. Here we will discuss how to make two ear wire designs that are attractive, easy to make, and not available to buy. We recommend using half hard wire in only sterling, fine silver, gold-filled or solid gold. Dyed and colored wires are not suitable for use as ear wires. The chemicals in the dyes may be carcinogenic. The colored wire shown in these pictures is used solely because it photographs better than the silver or gold wire.

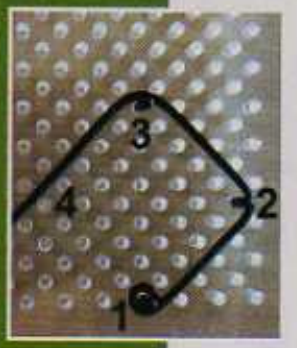
These inexpensive earrings are a great marketing tool when selling jewelry at shows. When your earrings are done, you can say you made it all, right down to the wires!

1 The first one we will make is the square ear wire. Because of the way this earring hangs, it tends to stay on, and for this reason the design is quite popular. Cut two 3½" segments of 20- or 21-gauge half hard wire. Make a regular loop in one end of both segments of wire. Choose the end of the wire with the flush cut for making the loop.

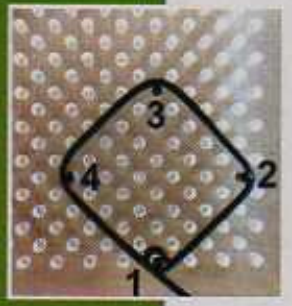
2 Hold the wire by this loop, and straighten the wire. If you have nylon jaw pliers, the easiest way to straighten the wire is by pulling it through the jaws of the pliers several times until the wire is straight.



3 Position pegs 1 and 2 in your jig, about ¾" apart. Leave the remaining pegs off your jig and out of your way. More pegs will be added in later steps. Place your initial loop on peg 1 and bend the wire against peg 2 until the wire rests adjacent to the empty hole waiting for peg 3, with no pressure applied to the wire. This will require you to push the wire and release it to see if it has been pushed far enough. When pushing the wire, it is better to push with your finger as close to peg 2 as possible.



4 Add peg 3 to your jig and push the wire against this peg so that it rests adjacent to the empty hole waiting for peg 4, with no pressure applied.



5 Add peg 4 to your jig and push the wire against this peg until the wire rests adjacent to peg 1, with no pressure applied. It may be necessary to lift your wire over peg 1 as you are pushing so that with no pressure applied, the wire will relax back to rest adjacent to peg 1 as shown.

Remove your wire component from your jig and cut the excess wire from the end about ⅛" from the loop that was formerly on peg 1. At this point, the wire component should appear as shown.

6

Rotate the loop in this wire component so that it is on the outside of the square. Grasp the loop with your bent chain nose pliers and hold the rest of the piece in your non-dominant hand. Twist your pliers 180° so that the wire component will appear as shown.

7

Place the wire component on the anvil or bench block, and hammer with a nylon hammer or a metal chasing hammer. The chasing hammer will flatten the wire slightly and will result in a more permanent finished earring. The nylon hammer will harden the wire without changing its shape. When hammering, many light blows are appropriate. This is not like making a horseshoe. You will not need to pound the wire.

8

When you are done hardening the wire, you will need to round the ends of the ear wire with either a cup burr tool or with a file. A nail file will do, although you might not want to use your nail file on your fingernails afterwards. The cup burr tool is better. Spin the cup end of the tool on the end of your wire until any sharp ends on the wire are removed. This should take about 30–45 seconds.

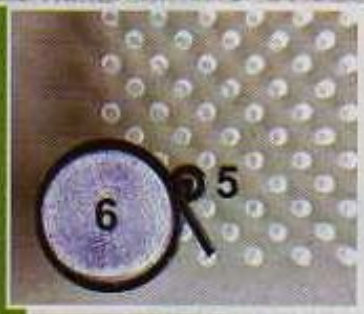
9

The second ear wire design is called "simple earrings", because they're very simple to make! Making this ear wire requires one metal peg and one Super Peg™ or other larger round peg.

Cut two wire segments, each 2½" long in 20- or 21-gauge sterling, gold-filled or gold wire. Make a loop in one end of the wire.

10

11 Grasp the loop and straighten the wire segment by pulling it repeatedly through the jaws of your nylon jaw pliers.



12 Position a regular peg (peg 5) and a ½" Super Peg™ (peg 6) in your jig as shown. Place the loop in your wire on peg 5, and wrap the wire around the larger peg as shown. Please note that the loop in your wire should point away from the large Super Peg™, peg 6.

13 Remove the wire from your jig and cut the excess wire about 3/16" from the initial loop.

14 Place the wire component on your anvil or bench block and harden the wire by hammering with either your nylon or metal chasing hammer.

15 Round the end or the wire and remove any burrs from the wire using your cup burr or file.

Gary Helwig

Gary's engineering background helped him when his mother came to him with her handmade wire jewelry. Gary made a pattern for his mother (a jig) so that her wire components could be made with more consistency. These patterns have morphed to become the Wigjig family of jewelry making jigs and accessories. Gary currently holds three US patents for jewelry tools. He can be reached at gary@wigjig.com or gary@wigjig.net.

classic elegance

Pearl chandelier earrings.

SKILL LEVEL

BY DALE "COUGAR" ARMSTRONG

TOOLS & SUPPLIES

- Flat nose pliers
- Round nose pliers
- Fine chain nose pliers
- Flush cutters
- Pin vise
- Quilter's tape
- Ruler in mm and inches
- Extra fine point marker
- Cup burr
- Electric drill or screwdriver with keyless chuck
- Double barrel bailmaking pliers
- 22-gauge square half hard wire
- 20-gauge round, (# 8) spring hard wire, or ready-made ear wires
- 6–7mm large hole freshwater pearls, 16
- 1½" headpins, 2
- 2" headpins, 4
- 4mm seamless metal beads, 6
- 6mm corrugated saucer beads, 4
- 5mm corrugated melon beads, 4

Photo of finished piece by Todd Mosby; all other photos courtesy of the author.

During the years that I have been designing and creating wire jewelry, many folks have remarked that my work has a Victorian or Edwardian flair—romantic, lacy, and elegant. My favorite personal challenge is to look at a piece of antique, often cast jewelry and to formulate a pattern to recreate that piece in wire. Thus, designing chandelier earrings and lavaliere neckpieces has been my forté. Although today's trend is more toward the use of crystals, I personally love the "classic elegance" of pearls—always in style.

Before you start, please be aware that in my personal opinion, this is an advanced design. In order to execute the pattern properly, you should have solid experience with making bindings (or wraps) with square half hard wire, be able to make eye pin charms, and be able to measure precisely.

Tip: An extra fine point marker is a necessity in order to avoid over-measuring.

1

Straighten, clean, and cut eighteen 3" pieces of 22-gauge square half hard wire. Separate them into two groups of 9 wires each. Bundle each group of 9 wires, side by side, with one flush end, and tape them near each end on both groups of wire. On each flat bundle, measure down from the flush end 1", and make a mark across the entire bundle. Straighten, clean and cut two 6½" pieces of 22-gauge square half hard wire and put them aside. These wires will be used as the binding, or wrap wires.

2

Using one 6½" piece of 22-gauge square half hard wire, start binding on top of the mark, making sure that the end of the wire goes completely across the bundle at both the start and the finish of the wrap. Bind down from the mark 4 times to show on the back, showing 5 wires across the front. Trim the wrap/binding wire flush with the side of the bundle. This is referred to as the main binding.

Repeat this on the other earring bundle, starting your wrap opposite the first bundle. If you started wrapping to the right on one bundle, you will start wrapping to the left on the other—making a matching left and right pair of earrings.

NOTE: All wraps will begin and end on the FRONT of the earring bundles, and be covered later, giving a smooth finish to the backside.

3

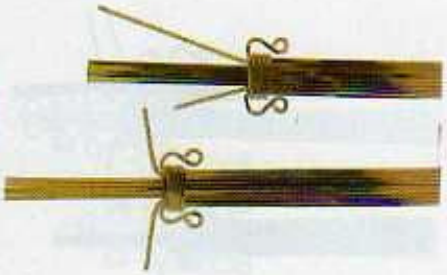
Remove the tape from the top, or the shorter end, of each earring bundle. Slightly fan out the outer edge wires on the top of each bundle. Measuring from the top of the binding wire toward the top of the earring bundle, measure each of the edge wires to ½", and trim.

4

Place the tip of the round nose pliers on the very end of a ½" long edge wire, and roll a perfect circle up toward the side/top of the earring bundle. Remove the round nose pliers, replace the tip just behind the circle on the same wire, and roll it down toward the side/base of the bundle. End this by placing an "inverted swan" shape next to the bindings. Repeat this on the remaining 3 edge wires, 2 total on each bundle.

Slightly fan out the next 2 edge/side wires away from each main bundle, and twist them with the pin vise. Measuring from the top of the main binding up, trim each twisted wire to 7/16". Using your fingers, gently bend each twisted 7/16" wire to the side, following the curve of the "inverted swan."

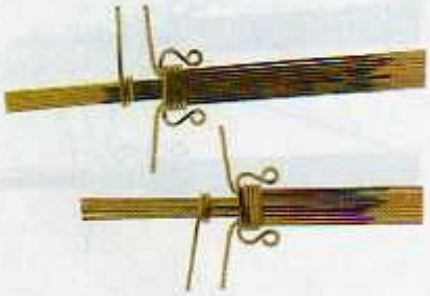
5



From the top of the main binding, measure 3/16" toward the top of the bundle, and mark it. Use the remaining wrap wire, starting on the front mark, to go completely across the bundle, and bind 2 times to show on the back, showing 3 wires on the front. Measure the wrap wire to 7/16" longer than where it comes across the bundle the third time, and trim. Again, remember to mirror your moves by starting one bundle wrap to the right and the other to the left.

NOTE: It is an optical illusion that your work does not seem symmetrical on the front of the earring bundles! This is because the wraps are beginning and ending on the front of the bundle, instead of the back. When the design is complete, you will see a major difference.

6



Place the tip of the fine chain nose pliers at the end of the wrap wire and make a small, tight loop, heading down along the side of the bundle. Use the flat nose pliers to make a rosette loop toward the center of the earring bundle, ending with the rosette on top of the binding. Repeat this on the other bundle.

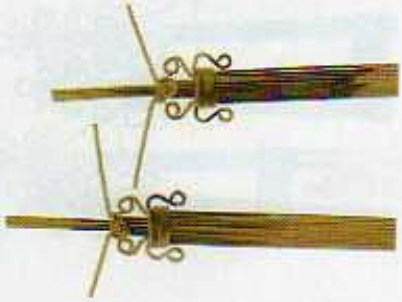
7

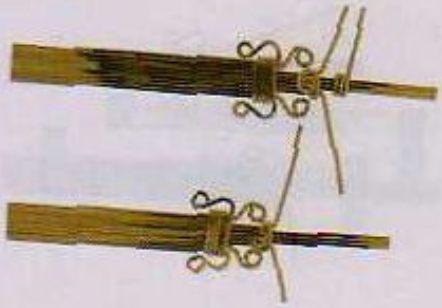
Return to the twisted wires coming from the main binding wire at the center of the earring bundle. Using the tip of the round nose pliers, roll the end of the twisted wire up toward the top/side of the bundle, ending with the half heart shape placed alongside the bundle, and just below the second set of bindings. Repeat on the other 3 twisted edge wires.

8

Fan out the next 2 edge/side wires on each bundle, toward the sides and twist them with a pin vise. Trim each twisted wire to 5/8". Repeat this on the other bundle.

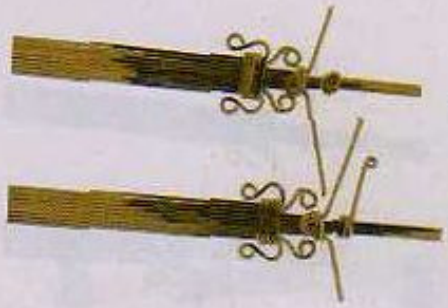
9





10

From the top of the binding wire with the rosette, measure ⅛" toward the top of the bundle, and mark. Use the remaining wrap wire, bind completely across the bundle 2 times to show on the back, showing 3 wires across the front. Measure 7/16" after the wrap wire crosses the third time, and trim. Twist the end of the wrap wire with a pin vise. Again, remember to start the wraps on one bundle from the left, and on the other bundle from the right.

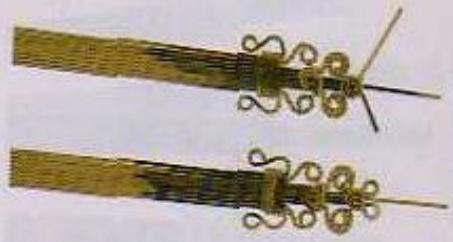


11

Using the fine chain nose pliers, place the tip at the end of the twisted wrap wire end and start a tiny, tight rosette, rolling toward the top of the earring bundle. Finish the rosette with the flat nose pliers, ending with the completed rosette on top of the binding.

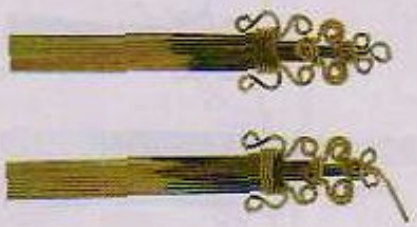
12

Return to the twisted wires coming from the second set of bindings. Repeat Step 8, ending with the lacy heart shape just under the third set of bindings, and alongside the bundles.



13

Slightly fan out the last 2 wires on either side of the center wire of each bundle. Measuring from the top of the last binding made, toward the top of the bundle, trim each of these edge wires to ¼" long. Using the tip of the round nose pliers, roll the end of the wire toward the center, forming a nice loop on either side of the remaining center wire on each bundle.

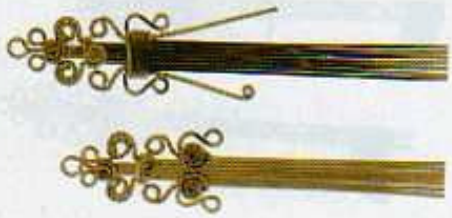


14

On the back, from the top of the third binding wire, measure up the remaining center wire 7/16", and trim. With your fingers, bend the center wire to the right on one bundle, and to the left on the other. Use the round nose pliers to form an eye loop, or lollipop, at the top center of each earring. This will be used later, to attach the ear wires. The tops are now finished.

Remove the tape from the bottom of the earring bundles, and fan out the outer 2 edge/side wires. Twist them with a pin vise. Measuring from the bottom of the main binding, trim each wire to ¾" long. Use the fine chain nose pliers to start a tiny, tight rosette, rolling the end of the twisted wire toward the side/center of the earring bundle. Finish rolling with the flat nose pliers, and make a rosette up toward the top/center. Place the rosettes side by side, on top of the main binding wire.

15



Fan out the next 2 edge/side wires to either side of the bundle. Raise the center wire straight up, out the front of the bundle, at a 90° angle.

16

Place the regular chain nose pliers on the center wire, at the base where it comes from the binding, and hold it there. While using your fingers, bend the center wire back toward the bottom of the bundle, forming a platform to add a pearl or a bead. Repeat on the other bundle.

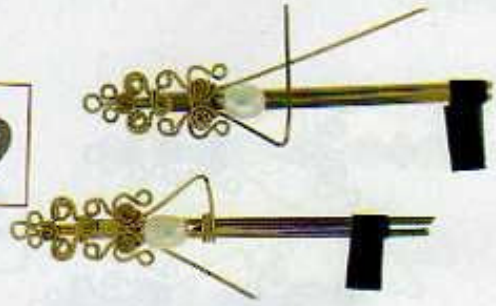
17

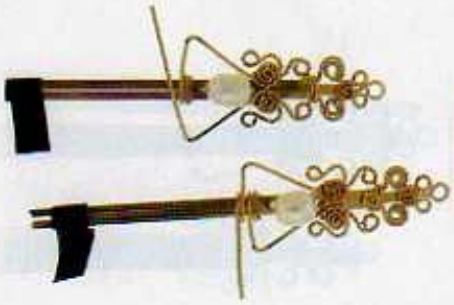
Thread one freshwater pearl onto the center wire platform. Place the chain nose pliers on the center wire, 1mm after the pearl, and bend the center wire at a 90° angle, back through the center of the bundle. Place the flat nose pliers on the center wire where it comes through the back of the bundle. Bend the center wire toward the base of the bundle, at a 90° angle, back where it belongs. Tape the center 5 wires together.

18

Return to the fanned edge wires. From the bottom edge of the main binding, measure down 1", and mark each of the 4 wires. Place the round nose pliers just above the mark on the right wire on one earring, the left on the other, and bend toward and crossing over the center bundle, at a 45° angle. Use this wire to wrap the center of the bundle, going from where it crosses up, 2 times to show on the back, showing 3 wires on the front, ending just under the pearl. Trim them flush with the edge of the bundle. *NOTE: The distance from the inside of the 45° bend to where the wire crosses the bundle is approximately 5mm.*

19

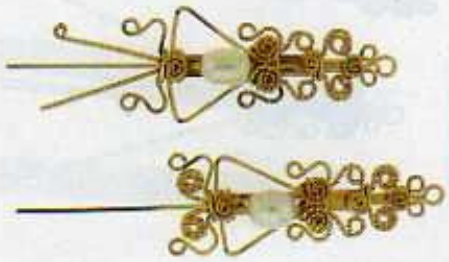




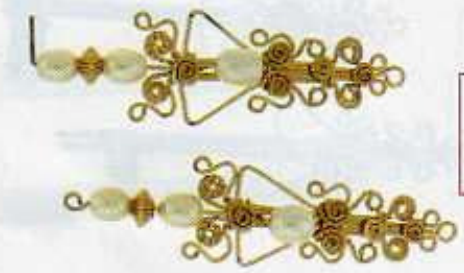
20 On the opposite edge wire, place your round nose pliers just below the mark. Repeat Step 19, with the exception of where the wire crosses the bundle, wrap down, once around the back.

21 Twist the end of the wrap wire with a pin vise (when it comes back around the front). Trim it to ½" and roll a rosette tightly toward the top of the earring, placing the finished rosette on top of the bindings, under the pearl.

22 Remove the tape from the bottom of each bundle. Fan out the next 2 edge wires on each bundle, and trim each to ⅝" long. Place the tip of the round nose pliers at the end of each wire, and roll up forming a nice circle. Remove the pliers and replace them on the same wire, immediately behind the circle, and roll down, forming the "inverted swan." End this by placing the swan shapes directly under the 45° angle bends that surround the pearl.



23 Fan out the next 2 edge/side wires on each bundle, and twist with a pin vise. Trim each to ¾" long. Use the fine chain nose pliers to start a tiny, tight rosette, rolling the wire tip toward the outside edge and up toward the "inverted swan." Finish the rosette with the flat nose pliers, and place each rosette into the body of the swan. Repeat with all 4 wires.



24 On the center wire of each bundle, place one pearl, a 6mm corrugated saucer bead, and another pearl. End by bending the center wire to the side, locking on the beads. Finish by using the round nose pliers to make an eye loop at the bottom of the center/bead wire.

Create all the headpin charms. *NOTE: Do not wrap the loops at the tops of the charms, thread them through their proper places first—then wrap them in!* On all four 2" headpins, start with a pearl, add a 5mm corrugated melon bead, another pearl, and top with a 4mm seamless round, metal bead. On both of the 1 ½" headpins, start with a pearl, add a 6mm corrugated saucer bead, and top with a 4mm seamless round, metal bead.

25

Attach the headpin charms to their places on the chandeliers. One single pearl charm goes at the bottom of each center wire. The remaining four longer charms go into the swan heads, on either side of the center.

26

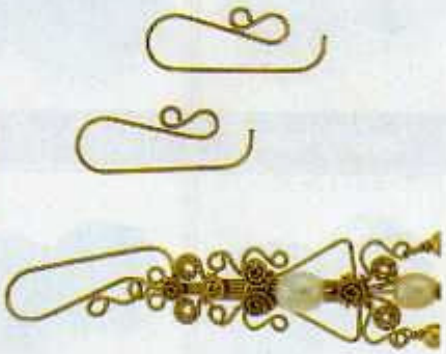
To create matching swan ear wires, cut 2 pieces of 20-gauge, round #8 (spring hard) wire 2¾" long. Use a cup burr in an electric drill or screwdriver to polish off both ends of both of the wires. Place the tip of the round nose pliers at the end of the 2¾" wire, and roll up once. Remove the pliers and replace them about ⅓ of the way up, immediately behind the loop, and roll back toward the base of the wire, forming a swan.

27

From the bottom of the swan body toward the top of the wire, measure ¾" and bend back. The smaller barrel of bailmaking pliers is perfect for this. Place the small barrel of the bailmaking pliers at the straight end of the ear wires, and bend slightly toward the front of the ear wire. *NOTE: This curve is opposite most French wires, and prevents the ear wires from working their way out of your ear!*

To attach the chandelier to the ear wire, simply feed the top loop of the earring onto the back leg of the ear wire, slide it around to the front, and snap it into place in the swan's body.

28



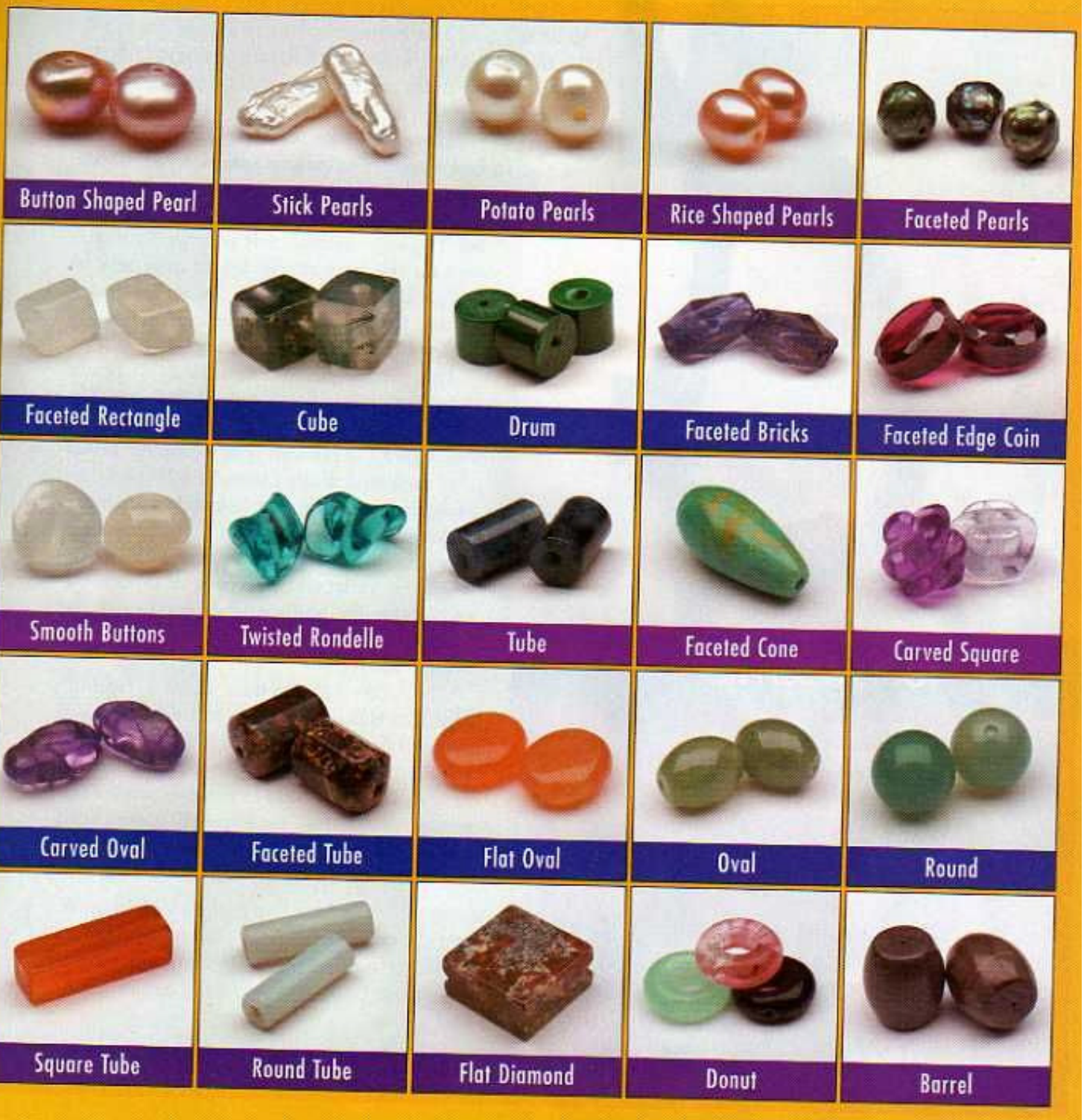
Dale "Cougar" Armstrong
is a diehard rockhound, lapidary, and a full-time wire artist and instructor. She can be contacted through her Web site at www.cougarscreations.com.

Step by Step Wire Jewelry

50 BEADS GLOSSARY

Beads come in so many shapes and sizes that it can be a little daunting when choosing some to incorporate in your wire jewelry designs. But once you've made your decision, you want to be sure you're ordering exactly what you've envisioned. Here are 50 bead shapes for reference the next time you need to order the perfect complement to your design.

Special thanks to Fire Mountain Gems & Beads for providing the beads in our glossary.



funky fu

Colored telephone wire gets style!

SKILL LEVEL ◎

BY STEPHANIE RIGER

I'm crazy about color, so I was thrilled t find a stash of telephone wire at my local recy cling store. Telephone wire is especially fun t use because it has several colors on each strand but 18-gauge colored craft wire works just as well for this project. The bright color mix o this necklace cheers me up, even on the dreari est day. If you want more elegance, make it i oxidized copper or even sterling wire.

This project includes two kinds of beads what I call "springs"—because they look lik bedsprings, and "crazies"—because they involve a lot of random wire wrapping. I used 11 of each kind of bead to make a 28" necklace Make the beads first, then assemble them into a necklace. Making beads with telephone wire is so much fun that you will want to make up your own variations. Just be sure to tuck the ends inside the beads so they don't poke the wearer—that's a telephone message you don't want to receive!

The following directions make a "spring" bead that is about 1½" long and uses the small mandrel (5/64" in diameter) that comes with the standard Twist 'n' Curl®. Vary the wire lengths or use a larger mandrel to make different sized beads. For "crazies," the steps will make a bead that is about 1" long and ½" in diameter. Vary the wire lengths to make different sized beads

TOOLS & SUPPLIES

- 155" of telephone wire or craft wire in multiple colors
- 30" of beading wire, such as Soft Flex® or Beadalon®
- 1 crimp bead
- Twist 'n' Curl® (available at local bead stores or www.twistncurl.com)
- Chain nose pliers
- Flush cutters
- Tape measure

Photo of finished piece courtesy of Jodi Murray; all other photos courtesy of the author.

To make springs, cut two 2' lengths of telephone wire in different colors, here in red and purple. Holding the wires together, put them through the hole in the handle of the Twist 'n' Curl®, extending them about 2", and folding them down against the handle.

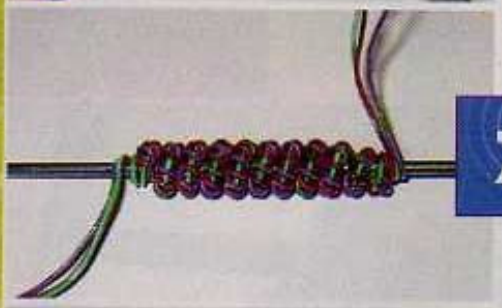
Use the index finger of your right hand to spin the handle of the Twist 'n' Curl® away from you. Use the other hand to hold the mandrel and the wires, letting the wires run through your thumb and forefinger. Hold the wire tightly so that it is firm against the mandrel. Make sure that the wires sit neatly beside each other, and do not overlap or twist as they wrap. Don't leave gaps in between the wraps—push them against the handle to make them snug up to each other if necessary.

When the wrap is about 3" long, cut the wire, leaving a 2" tail. Take the coil off the mandrel.

Insert a 1' length of wire in a different color, here in green, through the coil you have just made. Put all three ends through the hole in the handle of the Twist 'n' Curl®, extending about 2", and fold them down against the handle.

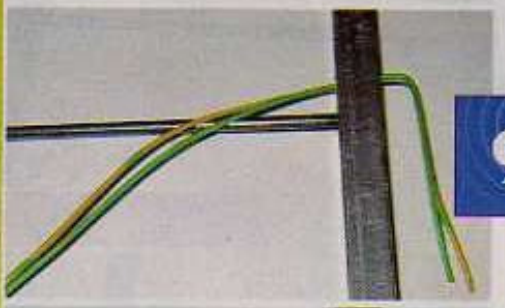
Wind all three wires around the mandrel, just as you did above. As you wind, let the outside coil (red and purple) slip through your thumb and forefinger so that it distributes itself evenly around the inner green wire.

6 When the bead is at the desired length, wind the three wires around the mandrel once.



7 Take the three wires out of the handle, and wind them around the mandrel once next to the bead.

8 Take the bead off the mandrel and cut off the tails. Use the chain nose pliers to tuck the ends inside the bead.



9 To make the "crazies," cut two 55" lengths of telephone wire in different colors, and insert the ends into the hole in the Twist 'n' Curl® handle. Hold the wires together, treating them as if they were one wire.

10 Start winding slowly, wrapping the wires against the mandrel back and forth, at random angles, for about 1".

11 Wind back toward the handle, overlapping the wraps you made previously, still winding at random angles. Wind back and forth in the middle of the bead several times, and back and forth across the whole bundle, stopping at the end farthest from the handle. Pull the wire when you wind so that it is firm against the mandrel. Once you have finished winding, squeeze the bead against the mandrel so that the wires are firmly in place.

Remove the bead from the mandrel, cut the tails off, and tuck the ends inside the bead.

12

Now for the fun part—arranging the beads to make a necklace. I like to have some color repetition, for example, a red and purple bead next to a purple and orange one next to an orange and yellow one, to help lead your eye around the necklace, but you can be as wild as you want to be in selecting color combinations.

Once you have an arrangement that pleases you, string the beads onto a 30" piece of beading wire (such as Soft Flex® or Beadalon®). Overlap the ends through a crimp bead. Pull the beading wire so that the beads are right next to each other. Squeeze the crimp bead firmly, trim the ends of the beading wire, and slide the crimp bead so that it is inside one of the colorful beads.

Stephanie Riger

Stephanie Riger knitted her way through classes in college and macraméd through graduate school. She began jewelry making about 8 years ago and quickly became addicted to bead and wire crochet, which she teaches in the San Francisco Bay area. Her wire wrapped mermaid pin won the Creative Wire Jewelry Forum Design Challenge in March 2005. See more of her work on her Web site, www.stephanieriger.com.

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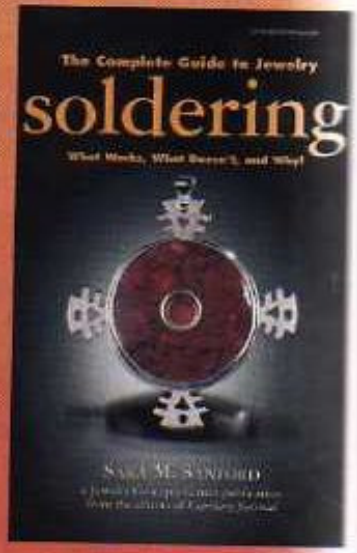

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holly leaf ornament

Wire and beads make a sparkling ornament.

SKILL LEVEL

BY LINDA JONES

This wire and bead holly leaf design is highly versatile—you can create it as a napkin ring, to decorate those special table settings for holiday meals. It can be used to enhance a table centerpiece, wired around a candle, or positioned in a pot of real holly leaves! Alternatively, connect it to the top bow of a wrapped present as a gift tag. Stitch it to the front of a card, suspend it from the Christmas tree, or hang it in the window so that the light reflects and sparkles on the beads!

A basic understanding of wire skills is enough to attempt the project, and you can create it in any color combinations that suit your taste and style. Instead of the traditional red and green that I have used, why not be radical and attempt a table setting using soft purple and silver! As long as you continue the color theme throughout, it will look stunning!

TOOLS & SUPPLIES

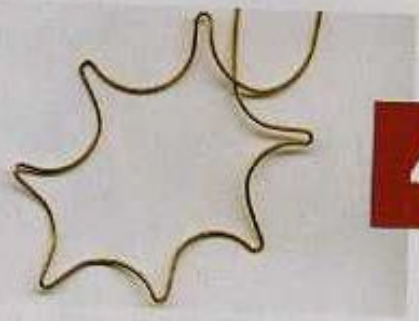
- Round and flat nose pliers
- Wire cutters
- Hammer and steel stake
- Cylindrical dowel
- 20- and 28-gauge gold-plated round wire
- Selection of green beads and 1 red bead.

Photo of finished piece by Todd Murray; all other photos courtesy of the author.

1 Working directly from a spool of 20-gauge wire, curl the wire around a cylindrical dowel or mandrel (approximately ½" in diameter).

2 Place the tips of your round nose pliers at the end of the first curve to bring the wire down. Reposition the cylindrical dowel next to the first curve, and form another curve with the wire.

3 Continue curving the wire, following the previous steps, to create a scalloped outline.



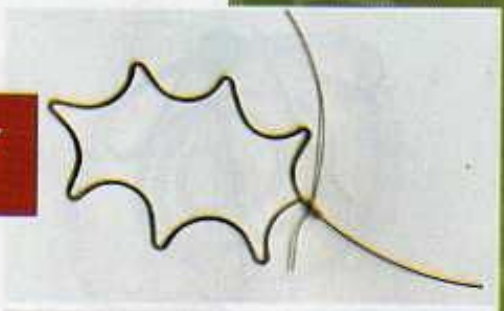
4 You should have 4 curves on each side, to form the holly leaf shape.

5 Cut the wire off the spool, leaving at least a 2" tail at the end. Wrap the shorter cut end around the top of the tail, binding it around several times to secure. Cut off any unsightly ends.

6 Gently hammer the wire frame outline of the holly leaf, avoiding the top, wrapped end. This spreads, flattens, and hardens the wire.

Measure and cut a piece of 28-gauge wire, approximately 1½" longer than the length of the leaf. Secure this wire at the top of the leaf by wrapping it around the tail a couple of times. Once it is secure, cut off any unsightly ends.

7



Thread your chosen selection of beads onto this fine-gauge wire to fill and decorate the center of your leaf.

8

Secure the fine wire at the other end of the leaf by wrapping it around the very tip of the frame a couple of times. Cut off any excess, and check to make sure that there are no spiky ends protruding.

9

To create the top bow on the leaf, cut approximately 6" of 20-gauge gold-plated wire. Position your pliers about 1" from the center, and loop the wire around your round nose pliers so that it crosses over itself.

10

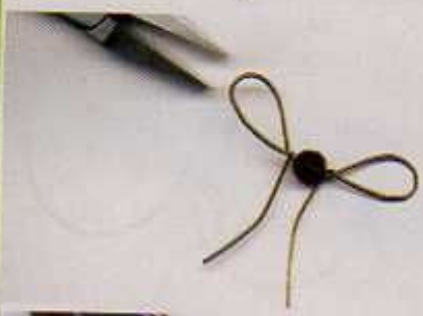
Thread a bead for the center of the bow, and push it up to the loop of wire.

11

Loop the wire around your round nose pliers as before, to form the other side of the bow.

12

13 Twist the ends of the wire around themselves on each side on both sides of the bead.



14 Using your flat nose pliers, pull each loop of wire upward to form the shape of a bow, with the bead in the middle representing the center knot.

15 Using the tips of your round nose pliers, begin curling little circles at the ends of the wire to form spirals. Gently hammer each looped end of the bow, being very careful to avoid the center bead. This will flatten the metal and toughen it slightly.

16 To connect the bow to the top of the leaf, wrap the 2" extended wire around one side of the center bead of the bow.

17 Bring this wire to the other side of the bead, keeping its shape around the base of the bead. Secure it on the other side of the center bead. Remove any excess wire with your cutters, and ensure that there are no spiky ends protruding.

Linda Jones

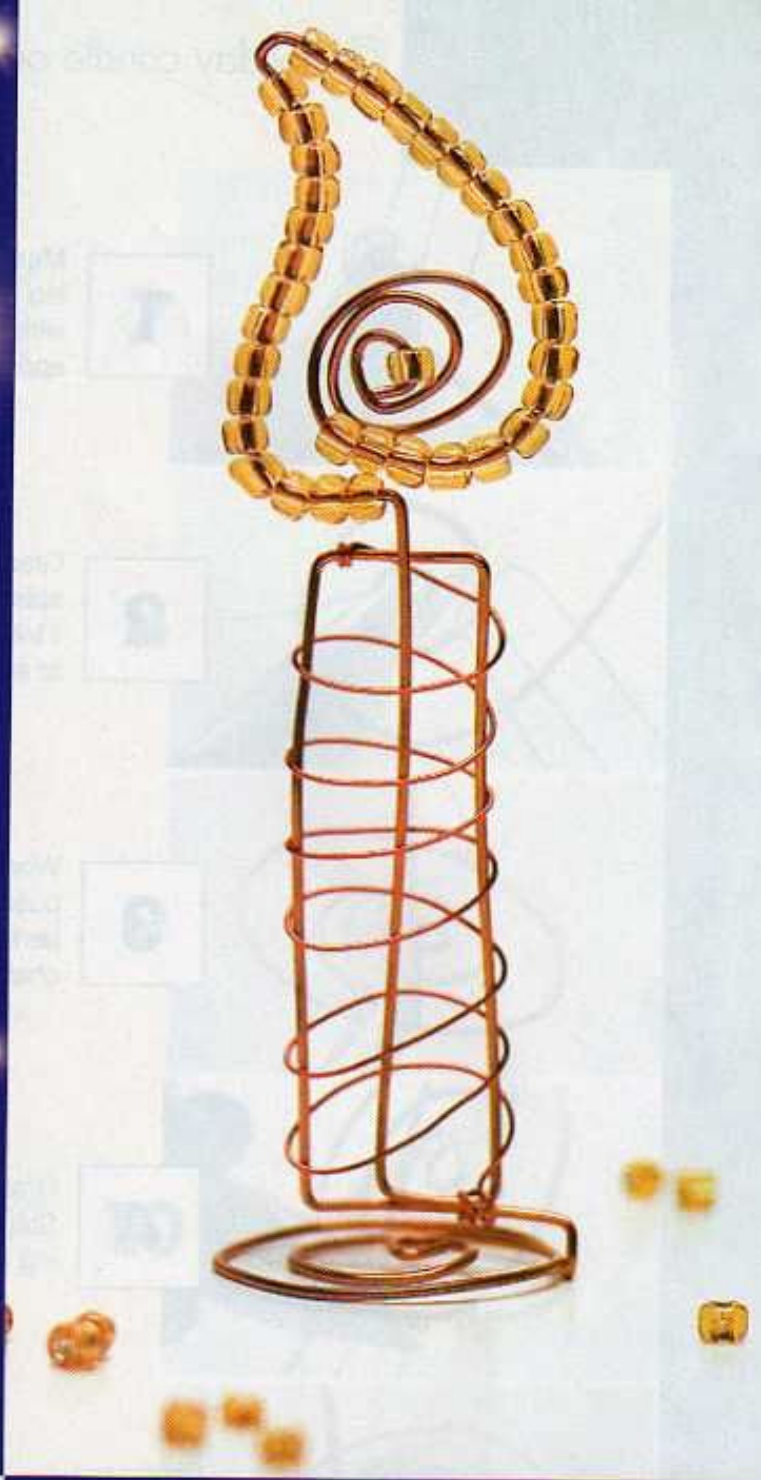
Having studied jewelry making 14 years ago in London, Linda Jones completed a City & Guilds in Jewelry Design, specializing in enameling. As well as teaching and demonstrating wire techniques, she makes a range of bespoke wedding jewelry, which includes tiaras, headdresses, necklaces, and earrings. Visit her Web site www.wirejewellery.co.uk.

holiday candle ornament

Golden beads create a festive flame.

SKILL LEVEL

BY RAE ANN WILSON



The potential contained within a coil of wire is quite exciting—it is essentially a line in space, making wire not only a versatile medium with which to create jewelry, but art as well. This candle ornament requires little in the way of tools and materials. It contains simple bends and loops, and makes a delightful and festive decoration.

TOOLS & SUPPLIES

- Chain nose pliers
- Flush cutters
- 18-gauge copper wire
- 22-gauge copper wire, color of your choice
- 6/0 transparent yellow seed beads, 35
- 8" of metallic string (optional)
- Ruler

Photo of finished piece by Todd Murray; all other photos courtesy of the author.

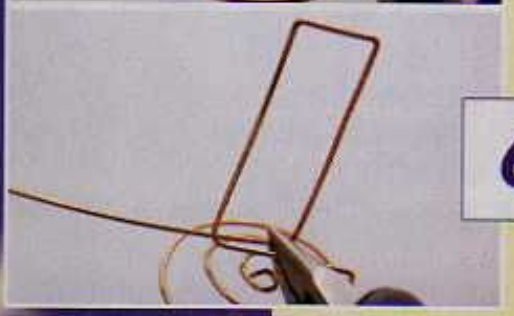
1 Measure and cut a 22" length of 18-gauge wire, making sure both ends are flush cut. Grasp one end of the wire with your chain nose pliers and create a loop approximately ¼" in diameter.

2 Grasp the loop with your chain nose pliers and loosely spiral the wire, creating a base that is approximately 11/4" in diameter; this may take 3 or 4 spiral loops to achieve.

3 When you have finished turning the final spiral loop, push the wire against the spiral to complete the circular shape. Grasp the spiral at this point using your chain nose pliers, and bend the wire straight up.

4 Grasp the wire directly above the bend created in Step 3, and bend the wire back over the spiral, bisecting its circular shape.

5 Grasp the wire above the next to last loop in your spiral and bend it straight up, away from the spiral.



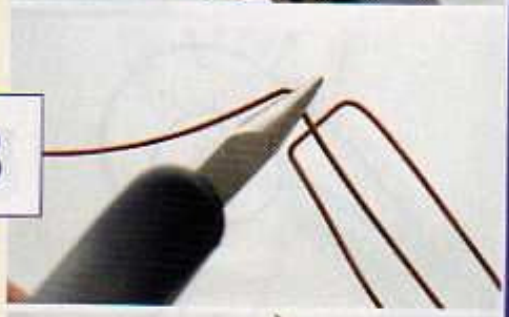
6 Continue to bend 3 more corners, creating a rectangular shape that is approximately 2" high and ½" wide.

Grasp the two pieces of wire midway at the base of the rectangle created in Step 6, and bend the loose wire away from the spiral, bisecting the candlestick.

7

Grasp the wire just above the top of the candlestick, and bend it away from the center.

8

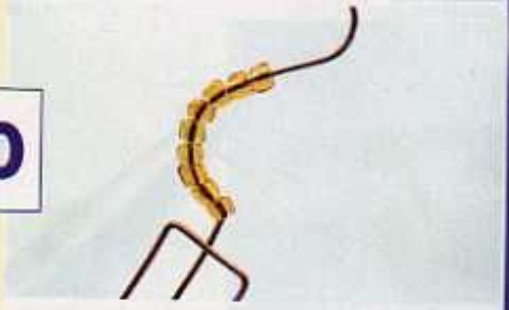


Still grasping just above the candlestick with your chain nose pliers, create a gentle reverse S-curve using your fingers as mandrels. This is done by placing your middle finger over the bend created in Step 8, using your thumb to curve the wire over it, and then using your pointer finger to curve the wire back over your thumb. The wire begins taking on the form of a flicker of flame.

9

Add 15 transparent yellow 6/0 seed beads to the wire, letting them slide to the base of the flame.

10

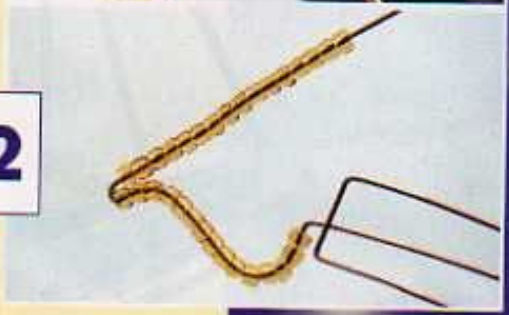


Grasp the wire just above the last seed bead added in Step 10, and bend the wire back toward the candlestick.

11

Holding your ornament upside-down, add the remaining transparent yellow 6/0 seed beads to the wire, letting them fall to the tip of the flicker of flame.

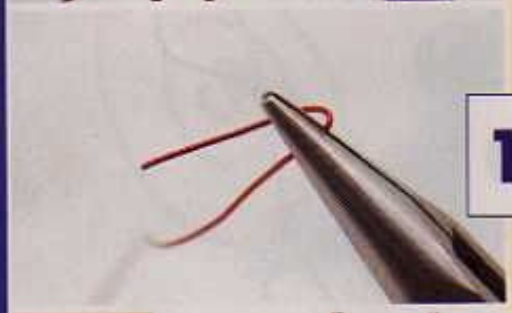
12



13 Draw the last seed bead added down to the end of the wire, and grasping the end of the wire with your chain nose pliers, form a loop around the seed bead.

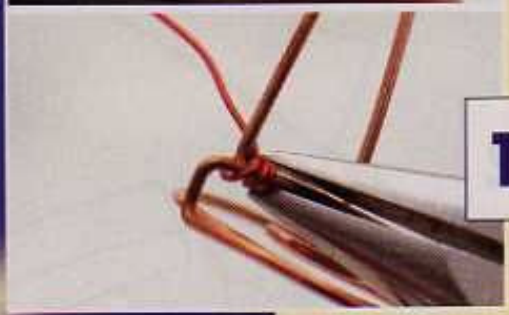
14 Grasp the loop and loosely spiral the wire around it, curving the wire toward the center of the flame.

15 Tuck the spiral created in Step 14 just above the top of the wick created in Step 7, closing the shape of the flame.



16 Measure and cut a 12" length of 22-gauge wire, making sure both ends are flush cut flat. Grasp one end of this wire with your chain nose pliers, and form a small hook.

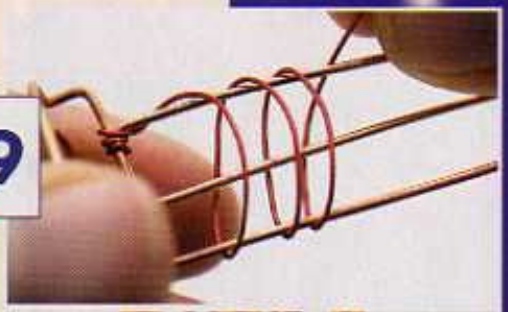
17 Loop the hook around the 2 wires overlapping at the base of the candlestick formed in Step 6.



18 Wrap the small tail of 22-gauge wire hook from Step 17 around the 2 wires at the base of the candlestick at the corner.

Loosely coil the long tail of 22-gauge wire hook around the 2" length of candlestick formed in Step 6.

19



Wrap the remaining end of the 22-gauge wire at the upper corner of the candlestick opposite the wrapped lower corner.

20

If you would like to hang your candle ornament, tie a length of metallic string at the tip of the flame's flicker, or otherwise, let the candle stand on its own to decorate a favorite spot in your home or office!

21

Rae Ann Wilson

is a freelance graphic artist and web developer living on the New Hampshire seacoast with her husband and daughter. She pursues her passion for art and design in several mediums, including wire. Rae Ann can be contacted via her Web site at http://www.sunrae-artworks.com.

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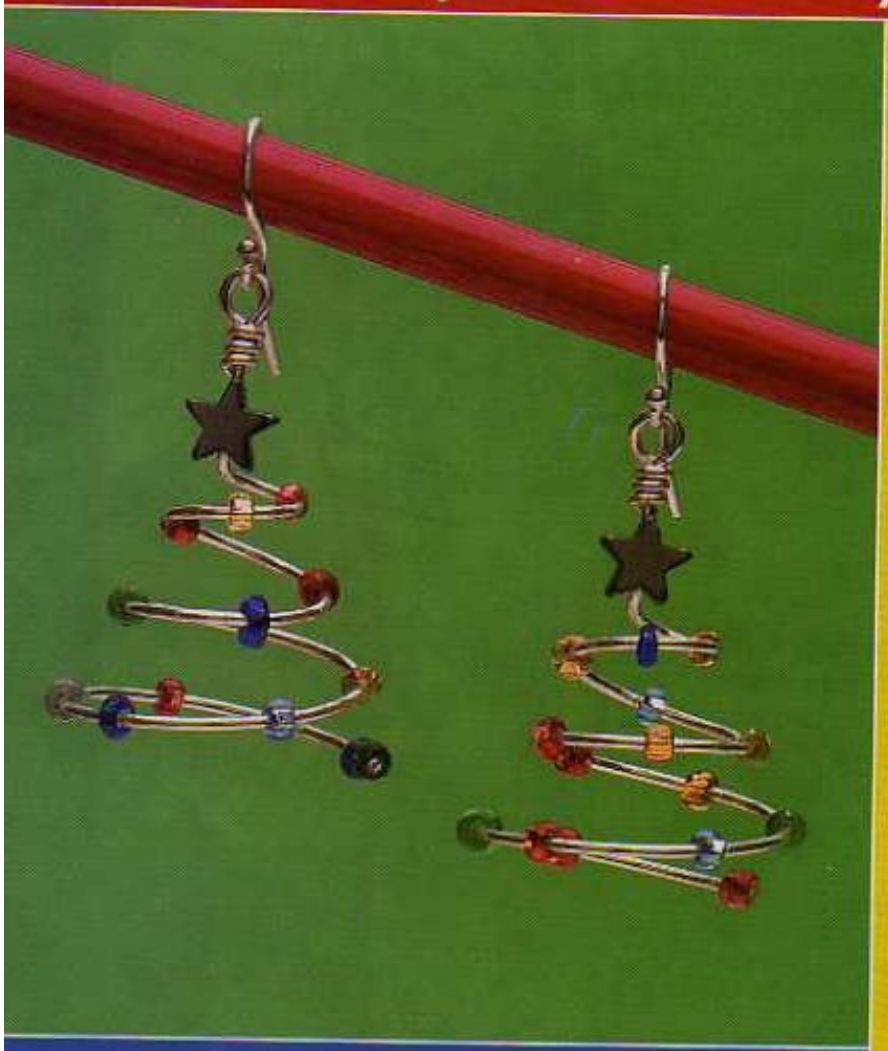
merry merry earrings



Swirling wire trees with colorful beads.

SKILL LEVEL ◎

BY JULIE CHARLES

It's fun to have a special pair of earrings that you bring out once a year for the holidays. These airy, colorful Christmas tree earrings are very light and comfortable to wear, and inevitably bring compliments to the wearer! In addition, they're easy to create and make a wonderful gift. Best of all, there are any number of creative variations you can dream up to make them your very own. Try tweaking the spiral shape to make tall thin trees, or perhaps make short squatty spirals. Use different beads to decorate your trees, or try using a metal other than sterling. You might want to eliminate the loop at the top of the earring and bend the wire to be your ear wire instead. Part of the fun is adding your own touch to the design. I hope you'll use these directions as a jumping off point for your own creations.

A note about the sterling wire used for this project: For years I used 21-gauge wire for these earrings. The thinner wire made threading the small silver lined glass beads easier. Recently, though, I've enjoyed the more substantial look of 20-gauge wire, and I just have to pick through the beads to find those that will accommodate the thicker wire. Because these earrings are not easy to polish, I'm now using the argentium sterling wire from www.rings-things.com, which resists tarnish. The argentium wire was featured in the Wire Products section of the Fall 2005 issue of *Step by Step Wire Jewelry*.

TOOLS & SUPPLIES

- Metal Wilton® cake decorator tip #5 (or other cone shape to use as spiral jig)
- Electric drill with 5/64" drill bit
- 7" pieces of 20-gauge half hard sterling round wire, 2
- Approximately 30 silver lined #11 glass seed beads
- G-S Hypo Cement (www.rings-things.com)
- 6mm hematite star shaped beads, 2 (www.rings-things.com)
- 2 French ear wires
- 2 French ear wire keepers - optional (www.rings-things.com)
- Chain nose pliers
- Wire cutters
- Round/concave bending pliers (www.rings-things.com) or round nose pliers
- Loop forming pliers (optional)

Photo of finished piece by Todd Murray; all other photos courtesy of the author.

There are many ways of forming a wire spiral. Feel free to use your own method or try this one that uses a jig made of a cone-shaped metal icing tip. Cut two 7" lengths of the sterling round wire.

Drill a hole at the bottom of the metal cake-decorating tip.

Place the tips of the 2 strips of the 20-gauge wire in the drilled hole.

Holding the wire tips with one hand, use the other hand to wind the wire about 4 times around the cone, ending at the top of the cone tip.

Remove the two wires from the cone, and separate them.

With chain nose pliers, hold the wire just at the top of the spiral, and bend it so that it points straight up.

7 Drop a hematite star on each of the treetops.

8 Form a round loop about ⅛" above the star bead, and wrap the wire just below the loop several times. Although you can use round nose pliers to make the loop, I love to use loop forming pliers.

9 Use a pair of fine nippers to clip the wire at the back of the earring as close to the loop as possible.

10 Clip off the bottom end of the wire if it is kinked from forming the spiral on the jig.

11 Thread approximately 15 seed beads on the bottom of your wire spiral.

12 Place a tiny amount of cement near the top of the spiral.

Scoot your first bead around and up the spiral onto the spot of cement. Twirling it just a bit will ensure that it is well-glued.

Repeat with each bead. I have spaced mine about ¼" – ½" apart. Note: If a bead gets stuck on its way up the spiral, just "smash" it with your chain nose pliers and make your problem bead vanish!

End your spiral with a final bead near the side of the earring in the back where it will be least noticeable. Make sure your last bead has just a little extra dab of cement.

Add an ear wire of your choice, handmade or store bought. My customers and friends appreciate the addition of a little rubber back to reassure them that their Christmas trees can't slip out of their ears and end up in the punch bowl at a holiday party! ☺

Julie Charles

a.k.a. Queen of Craft, is a self-taught jeweler who has made her living with wire for the past 15 years. A transplant from St. Louis, she now bends wire in Seattle. Her line of Live Wire Jewelry is sold in national catalogs, shops, and galleries as well as on her Web site, LiveWireJewelry.com. Some of her other creative endeavors can be viewed at Crackpot Mosaics.com and KnittersAnonymous.com. Julie is also a fun, sometimes wacky, always enthusiastic teacher of wirework and various crafts and can be reached at juliecharles@yahoo.com.

leather & wire bracelet

A contemporary combination.

SKILL LEVEL

BY NICHOLE BYERS

This piece was inspired by the wonderful, western looking clothing and jewelry in my favorite mail-order catalog. Sterling and leather are a great combination, and when combined with lampwork glass beads, you get a stunning bracelet that your friends will want to steal right off your wrist.

However, don't feel that because you are using leather, you are restricted to making western or biker-style jewelry. Use your imagination. Try different colors of leather, different colors and shapes of beads. You can have a unique, one-of-a-kind piece that reflects your own individuality.

I love using artisan lampwork beads in my wire designs, but another type of bead that I just love are the beautiful, colorful clay beads from Kenya (available from Dare VanVree at www.someenchantedbeading.com).

TOOLS & SUPPLIES

- Flush cutters (adequate for heavy-gauge wire)
- Flat nose pliers
- Chain nose pliers
- Long round nose pliers
- Short round nose pliers
- Ball peen hammer
- Steel bench block
- Tape measure
- Jeweler's file
- Light-colored hand towel, pad, or tray for working on
- 6" of 14-gauge sterling wire, dead soft
- 1" of thin leather cording
- An assortment of Hill Tribe or Bali silver beads with large holes
- Artisan lampwork glass beads: one tube, one tab, and three or more spacer beads
- A couple of Hill Tribe charms

Photo of finished piece by Todd Murray; all other photos courtesy of the author

Make a large jump ring with 14-gauge wire by making one complete wrap around the base of your long round nose pliers. Flush cut the ring off the piece of wire. This should use about 1" of wire, and leave you with about a 5" piece of 14-gauge wire for the wire half of the bracelet.

For the hook end of the wire half of the bracelet, make sure each end of the wire piece is flush cut. Hammer one end of the wire so that about ⅛" is slightly flattened.

Grasp the hammered end of the wire with your small round nose pliers, near the tip. Turn the pliers away from you, making a small curl with the hammered end. You can use your flat nose pliers to tighten the curl, but be careful not to pinch your fingers.

Using your long round nose pliers at the base, grasp the wire, with the curl facing you, about ⅛" below the curl. Wrap the tail end of the wire around the back jaw of the pliers, so it meets the curled end, making a hook. Use a jeweler's file to smooth any sharp edges.

Place the hook on the steel bench block, and use your ball peen hammer to slightly flatten the arc of the hook. This step is optional, but I really like that little touch.

Slightly open up the hook and hammer the back of the hook, slightly below where the tip of the hook ends. The flattened area of the base will serve as a stopper, so the beads stay in place and don't travel up the hook. Gently bend the hook back so it is almost closed again.

7 Add a variety of silver beads, as well as a tube bead, and maybe an extra glass bead or two, but leave 1" of wire free at the end. The beads at each end should be smaller. As you add your beads, try out the piece on the top of your wrist to size.

8 Use flat nose pliers to bend the extra inch of wire to a 90° angle, and use your round nose pliers to form that end into a loop. This is where you will attach the leather half of the bracelet. Very carefully use your fingers to bend the base wire into a rounded shape so that it conforms to your wrist, taking care that you don't crack any glass beads with the base wire.

9 Cut 1' of the leather cord. Bend one end into a loop, and tie a knot to secure the loop.

10 Add your beads (about 2½" of beads, but try it on before you tie your last knot), which should include the flat tabular bead. It doesn't matter if the ends of the knots stick out. If you don't want them to, the beads next to the knots should have holes large enough to be able to tuck the leather ends into.

11 Make another loop at the other end of the leather, and make another knot. Because the leather stretches out with time, try to knot the strand as close to the last bead as possible. If you find it hard to get the beads tight on the strand, you can use either your fingers or your small round nose pliers to slightly loosen the knot, then move the knot down the strand so the beads don't have much wiggle room. Make sure that the loop isn't getting larger.

Regarding size: Fortunately the leather is inexpensive, so if you finish the bracelet and find that it's too loose, first try to loosen and slide the knot. Don't be afraid to just cut the leather, take out a bead or two, and re-string the leather.

Gently use your pliers to open the loop end of the wire piece, insert one of the leather loops, and close the loop. For the finishing touch, use the jump ring that was cut in Step 1 to attach a silver charm or two to the leather loop that sits in the center of the bracelet.

12

Nichole Byers

is a full-time mom, jewelry designer, and lampwork bead maker who once again resides in her home state of Illinois, after many years in Minnesota. She is hopelessly obsessed with lampwork beads and wire jewelry, and her handcrafted jewelry and beads are available on eBay®, or at her Web site, www.nicholebyers.com.

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garnet coil earrings

Sterling silver and briolettes.

SKILL LEVEL ◎◎

BY MARIE CARTER

These earrings look sparkly and classy on, and they're fast and easy to make. Briolettes are available in almost every gemstone, and they are always an elegant choice.

TOOLS & SUPPLIES

- Round nose pliers
- Chain nose pliers
- Flat nose pliers
- Flush cutters
- Barrette file
- Ruler
- Chasing hammer
- 6 garnet briolette beads
- 18-gauge round sterling wire, dead soft, 4½"
- 24-gauge round sterling wire, dead soft, 28"
- 18-gauge 4.5mm jump rings, 6
- 26-gauge round sterling wire, half hard, 15"
- 2 French hooks or 2 leverbacks
- Sharpie® marker or ring mandrel
- *Optional: tumbler (with stainless steel shot, plastic pellets, 1 teaspoon of gentle liquid soap)*

Photo of finished piece by Frank DeSantis; all other photos courtesy of the

Creating the oval hoops.
Cut 2 lengths of wire, 2¼" each. Hammer each end of the wire a bit. Place one flattened end halfway down the round nose pliers. Turn the pliers once, overhand, to make a loop. Repeat the same action on the other side of the wire.

Make 2 of these components.

Take some of the 24-gauge round wire and snuggly wrap the full length of each bar. Please wear protective eyewear when wrapping with long lengths of wire to avoid poking yourself in the eye.

Be sure to check after every few wraps to make sure that your work is uniform. When you have completed the bar, snip and file. Remember the pinky finger test—if you can run your pinky finger over the edges of your work and not get scratched, your work is smooth.

Use either a pen, like a Sharpie®, or a ring mandrel (at the smallest part) to create the rounded oval shape of the hoop.

Bend the wire over the rounded shape of your mandrel.

Remove and close the two small loops together. Adjust it with your fingers or pliers as necessary. Repeat on the other bar.

6

Wrapping a briolette.
Note: I have used 26-gauge round wire to wrap the featured briolettes because the holes in the garnets are very small. You can use heavier gauge wire if your briolettes have larger holes.

Half an inch from the end of the 26-gauge wire, take the flat nose pliers and fold the wire straight up. Thread on the briolette and fold up the other side of the wire. Cross the wires over the stone. You are forming a triangle around the point of the briolette top.

7

Take your chain nose pliers to the base of the longer wire, and bend it back down a bit. Use your round nose pliers to make a double loop and finish by wrapping the wire end around the base 3 times. Snip and file gently.

Make 6 of these garnet briolette drops.

Finishing.
Attach 3 of the garnet briolette drops to each hoop. Attach each briolette to a 4.5mm jump ring by twisting the jump ring open and slipping it onto the hoop before closing. File each jump ring gently after closing to eliminate any burrs.

Attach each hoop to the French hook by twisting the loop on the hook open gently and slipping the hoop on before twisting the hook closed.

Enjoy your new, elegantly bohemian earrings!

Marie Lee Carter
finds inspiration everywhere, including iron gates on many windows on Park Avenue, and twists and turns of various headboards and chair backs. Her part-time business is e-mail based. She can be reached at mariel carter@verizon.net

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